

Back From the Dead by TheBlueAndGold

Category: Stranger Things, 2016

Genre: Sci-Fi, Supernatural

Language: English

Characters: Dustin H., Eleven/Jane H., Lucas S., Mike W.

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2018-06-16 15:46:14

Updated: 2019-01-21 20:49:48

Packaged: 2019-12-12 20:06:42

Rating: T

Chapters: 5

Words: 11,965

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: After the events of the past November nothing is the same for the small town of Hawkins, Indiana. With Will acting strange and and new friends shaking the town even further, will this town ever return to normal? What will they do to overcome the new obstacles that face them? (May change to M rated in later chapters for injury reasons.)

1. Chapter 1: A Warning Sign

Author's Note: Haven't had much experience with fanfics, so bear with me! I hope you all like it; please leave reviews if you liked it, give criticism if you think I need improvements in areas. Thank you!

Important Notes: ~::~ = Flashback/Memory (Italicized)

Italicized = Thoughts

. . . = Scene Change (Characters, subplot, etc.)

Chapter 1: A Warning Sign

"Michael! Get up here right now!" Mrs. Wheeler howled, and Mike could hear the anger laced her voice.

"What?!" Mike hollered back, clearly annoyed. He had been up extra early that morning getting ready for the D&D campaign he was hosting with his friends later that day. It was the last one of 1983, so to him it was extra important. He meticulously decorated the basement in accordance with the game, placing special details and references he knew his friends would understand. Although Mike was opposed to it, Dustin absolutely insisted on watching "A Nightmare on Elm Street," so he told Dustin to sneak it downstairs past his mom. Lucas wanted to order a new game that had come out recently, but Mrs. Wheeler told Mike to use his own money for it, so he did chores for about 2 weeks before he finally had pleased his friend. Will hadn't asked for anything, which made Mike a little nervous. He felt that ever since the events of the past November, his friend hadn't been the same. Like he was only a shell of whom he used to be... but that's not what tonight wasn't about. He couldn't think of that, or anything related to that, while they were together.

"You better go clean your room this instant! It's absolutely atrocious! I did not raise you as a pig!" She yelled down the stairs to Mike, who rolled his eyes but reluctantly obeyed his mother. "It better be spotless by the time I get up there!"

Mike groaned and dragged his feet up the stairs. *Ugh*, he thought. *Parents are the worst*. He passed Nancy's way-too-girly room and peeked inside, but she wasn't present. *Probably screwin' Steve*.

He opened the door to his room and trudged toward his bed, eyeing the mess surrounding him. He sloppily threw the pillows of his bed and made his bed the best as he could, given his mood. Clothes littered the room floor to ceiling (yes, clothes were on the fan on his ceiling), though he couldn't seem to recall how most of them got where they did. He began to pick up his clothes and transfer them to his laundry bin in his closet.

~::~~

"In here, I'll be right back. Okay?" Mike panicked; scared his mom would have suspicions.

She let out a shaky breath and hesitated.

"Please you have to get in, or my mom, she'll find you!" He begged. "Do you understand?"

She glanced between him and the closet, still unsure.

"I won't tell her about you . . . I promise."

A confused look crossed her face, " . . . Promise?"

"It means something that you can't break, ever!" Mike exclaimed as his mother called after him.

Mike looked back to her with a fearful expression, "Please!" He whispered.

She reluctantly walked inside, the door shutting behind her.

~::~~

Mike flopped down on the mattress and surveyed what he had left to do. He glanced at the trophies that adorned his desk, then at the Yoda figurine on his side table, and finally at the battery-operated dinosaur in the corner of the room, isolated from everything else. He couldn't help but think it might've been a metaphor for himself, for

Will. *Who am I kidding? Nothing is the same.* An unfamiliar anger bubbled within him. How could everybody go back to the way things used to be? There was no more normal for them. Not anymore. How could they pretend nothing happened? How could they forget about . . . How could they think that she . . .

"Michael! I'm coming up to check!" Mrs. Wheeler shouted from below, startling Mike from his thoughts.

He quickly got up, swooped the rest of the toys off of his floor, and stashed them into his toy chest right in the nick of time. He let out a puff of air in relief.

"Michael? Micha- oh! It looks nice sweetie! Thank you, " She expressed while opening an apple-flavored juice box for Holly, who was tucked under her arm. "Will's here, he's waiting in the basement."

Mike got up and started to head downstairs, "Thanks mom!"

"Will!" Mike exasperated as he got to the basement, immediately embracing his best friend in a hug.

"Hi!" Will replied meekly as Mike crushed him. He was happy to reunite with his friend, though.

"How've you been? Like the décor?" Mike asked excitedly, a little too excitedly. "Dustin and Lucas should be here any minute now, I should probably voice 'em on the Supercom . . . "

"It looks awesome Mike! I love the posters . . . and the Millennial Falcon? Awesome! You hung some of my drawings too . . . " Will gazed at the work Mike put into everything, appreciating it deeply as he traveled around the basement.

Eventually, Will made it to one of the back corners, where he saw a small blanket fort with Mike's Supercom laying neatly on one of the pillows. Blankets hung over top to form a canopy over the cushiony bottom, which was lined with various pillows and even more blankets. He might've been staring a little too long, though.

"That was where she stayed," Mike muttered, breaking the silence that had gathered in the miniscule room.

"Huh?"

"El," Mike remembered, "It's where slept when we found her . . ."

"Oh . . . " Will didn't know what to say. He knew it was a touchy subject, but he still wanted know about her. He felt a nervous lump form at the back of his throat but he pressed on. "Can you tell me about her? I mean . . . if you want to, that it . . . "

Mike hesitated, but thought it might be good to talk about her. Maybe it could help him, in some weird, complicated way that he wouldn't totally understand. "She was . . . amazing. She was the coolest girl I think I've ever met, though she wasn't really a talkative person." Will sat on the couch and patted the spot next to him, coaxing Mike to sit next to him and continue the story.

"She was like Yoda, she could move things with her mind . . . though she could also do so much more! It's so crazy and confusing and weird to explain, but she could find people. We made a sensory deprivation tank at the school, and that's how we found you. You would've been a goner without her. We probably all would . . . "

Will could feel the tension growing, so he asked more questions. "What other cool stuff did she do?"

"Aw man! It was awesome! I wish you were there! She made Troy pee himself in front of the whole school! It was the best!"

"Ha! What I would give to see that,"

"Yeah! And we were running away from these government guys; it was like some chase out of an action movie. She flipped a van over us! It was the best! And there was this other time when . . . "

Will couldn't help but smile at his friend's infatuation with Eleven. He could tell Mike genuinely cared about this girl cause he would do that *thing*. That *thing* he would do when he liked a girl. He always acted much too excited and goofy. Will found the amusement in it though, seeing how happy Mike became while talking about her. He only remembered little about Eleven, or El as the boys called her. He remembered her in his fort, telling him to hold on because they were

going to save him, and she did. She gave up her life for his. He could never repay her.

"But she's not gone though," Mike said, startling Will back into conversation. "I know she's out there, I know she is. Even if nobody else believes me, I know she is."

Will couldn't help but think that Mike was trying to convince himself rather than him. He was always usually the closest to Mike, and Will could tell that when everything had ended, Mike was not the same. But that was okay, because he wasn't either.

"Mike! Dustin and Lucas are here!" Mrs. Wheeler called down to Mike, a little irritated.

"Okay!" Mike yelled back. "The game board is over at that table, you can set it up if you want," Mike exclaimed, pointing to the back corner.

'Okay, I'll do that," Will replied heading towards the back of the basement.

"Mike!" Called Mrs. Wheeler, who was clearly losing her patients.

"*COMING!*" Mike screamed back harshly, the patients leaving him as well as he marched up the stairs to greet his friends.

Will sighed as he set up their game board, wanting nothing more than for him and his friends to be whisked away into a perfect fantasy land. He wished of a land where the events of last November didn't happen, where there were no Demogorgons or Upside Downs. He wished for a land that was impossible, one that only existed in the bellows of his dreams. A lurch in his stomach stopped every thought that whirled inside his mind. He ran to the bathroom and hurled up the small, slimy creature into the sink. What was he going to do now?

Author's Note: Sorry if not much happened, I wanted to get this story published so I wouldn't forget my thoughts and plans for it. I'll be updating this story with a new chapter every Saturday. I'll also be updating my Riverdale story every Friday. Thanks for reading; please leave a review! See you next week!

~Sofi

2. Chapter 2: Foreshadowing

Author's Note: I'm back! I just wanted to clear some things up: 1. This is my interpretation of season 2, this is not after the second season. 2. I will be using ideas from season 2 (such as Max, the Mind Flayer, a new official to run Hawkins Lab, etc.), but will not be using everything. 3. Nancy is with Jonathan, but they are both still friends with Steve. 4. I will be using OC's in this fanfic. Okay! Thank you for listening to me ramble, I'll let you enjoy the story.

Chapter 2: Foreshadowing

Thick, ruby-red drops oozed from the slices on her callused feet as she trudged along the forest floor. Another ruby trail dripped from her left nostril, as well as her ears. The crisp, icy winter wind bit tirelessly at the tips of her fingers and toes. She had long lost her shoes and socks, as well as Hopper's flannel, but she was able to find another coat. Her once blush-colored dress now a dingy shade of grey. Her buzzed, stubby hair barely even grown half an inch. The charcoal earth smudged her skin in various areas, and the plaid flannel that rested upon her shoulders was tattered and faded, one of the only reminders of her short, past life. It was all she wanted at the moment.

Despite her harrowing state, Eleven couldn't help but bask in the beauty of the winter wonderland presented before her. She'd never seen anything like it. Glassy, pointed icicles hung from perfectly arched tree branches coated elegantly with an ivory powder. Eleven made sure to eye every detail and take a mental photo, never to forget the scene. She savored the serene sensation until she had to move, leaving her mark in the starch white snow as she trudged on.

Further along, Eleven spotted the meager wooden crate between two towering creations of nature. She gingerly lifted the lid and inspected the contents: three perfectly round Eggo waffles wrapped tightly in saran wrap. She took hold of the golden treasure, glanced around the wood, and took off into the trees.

. . .

"You enter the vast cavern cautiously, taking in your surrounding," Mike eyed each party member, intensely and passionately unfolding the adventure. "You feel a gust of air and you take a gander further into the cave, you spot a Beholder staring back you! Will, your action?!"

"Umm, uh," Will stuttered, looking to Dustin and Lucas for guidance.

"Cast protection!" Dustin yelled while slamming his hands against the fragile folding table, several pieces falling over through consequence of Dustin's actions.

Will glanced worriedly at Lucas, "I agree, go for protection," Lucas sighed as he handed the die to Will.

He shook them in his hands and threw them into the air. They landed onto the game board with a small 'thud'.

"11! Yes!" Dustin proclaimed excitedly, the adventurers alluringly turning to their Dungeon Master.

"You successfully cast protection!" Mike started again, "The Beholder casts Slow Ray, but it failed. Lucas, your action?"

"I conjure two Axe Beaks!" Lucas rolls the die onto the table as the other two venturers intently watch.

"You rolled a 13 and conjured two Axe Beaks!" Mike continued while leering at each member, "The two creatures aggressively race towards the Beholder, AND-"

"Michael!"

"*WHAT?*" Mike shouted to his mother, brows knitted tight in annoyance.

"Pizza's here! Come up and get it!" Mrs. Wheeler replied down the stairs into the basement while feeding Holly a bottle.

"Be right there!" Mike hollered back, "I'll be right back guys,"

"Ok, don't forget the pop!" Dustin reminded Mike, but Mike just rolled

his eyes and headed up the stairs.

Mike grabbed two pizza boxes off the granite countertop, balancing them into his arms. Before heading downstairs, Mr. Wheeler asked for a napkin from the kitchen. Mike rushed to get it, not wanting to keep his friends waiting any longer. Mr. Wheeler took the favor and reclined in the La-Z-Boy, rushing Mike with memories.

~::~~

"That's our La-Z-Boy," Mike announced while following her around the living room.

She felt the surface, the soft cushiony feeling alleviating her. She pressed the pillow in her hands.

"It's where my dad sleeps," Mike continued, seeing the confusion cloud her face, "You can try it you want," She gave him a glance and a small nod. "Yeah,"

She cautiously stepped around to the front of the recliner, every once in a while peering at Mike, and sat down, sinking into the cushion.

"It's fun," Mike knelt down next to the chair. "Just trust me, okay?" She nodded once more. Suddenly, the chair gave way behind her and her feet rose. She was startled at first but calmed and nervously chuckled, Mike mirroring her chortle. "See? Fun, right?"

He swiftly lifted the chair into its former position. "Now you try."

She reached down to the lever protruding from the side of the recliner and pulled it, collapsing the chair once more. She rocked back and forth upon the chair slightly and looked towards Mike, both laughing at the experience together.

~::~~

"Check the monitors. She could be close." A man wearing a starch-white lab coat walked over to a panel and pressed several buttons. Simultaneously, various screens lit up and exposed a dark, ominous landscape.

The lab had been searching endlessly for the experiment, constantly checking out and venturing into the unknown land. They pushed their efforts to the max. They couldn't lose something as valuable as this. Unbeknownst to them, she no longer resided there.

After viewing the screens for many minutes, the man turned towards another waiting in the doorway. "Go notify Dr. Owens that we are moving forth with the plan." The man in the doorway gave a nod and exited the room. He walked through white tiled hallways that held the stench of rubbing alcohol and chemicals until he reached his destination. He stopped at a door to an office, a shiny metallic plaque nailed to the door held the words 'Dr. Owens'. The man opened the door and entered the office as Dr. Owens turned from his steel desk.

"We're moving forth with the plan, Dr.," the young man spoke, the essence of nervousness lining his voice.

"Thank you," Dr. Owens replied, "I will head over to the viewing room in a few moments."

"Of course, thank you doctor." The young man departed from the room and, a little too harshly, shut the door behind him. Once the man was well gone, Dr. Owens reached for the glossy black phone across his desk, brushing aside several documents and papers. He hastily dialed an unreadable and unrecognizable number, put the phone to his ear, and awaited an answer.

"Hello?" Dr. Owens spoke.

"Dr. Owens," the voice replied coldly.

"We are close. You can come back to the lab now, if your treatments are finished."

"Of course," the voice sounded intrigued, "I will be on my way as soon as I can."

"We'll be waiting," Dr. Owens responded, "Dr. Brenner."

...

Hopper drove his beat up and rusted pickup truck along the road up

against Mirkwood. It was late at night, for the street lamps had ignited hours ago. He searched the lining of the forest and spotted the parting of the trees.

Hopper exited his truck, not bothering to extinguish the ignition. The frigid winter air greeted him bitterly, biting at his exposed face. He advanced into the wood, the powdery white blanket beneath his boots crunching with every step. Hopper caught sight of the miniscule crate in the distance, picking up his pace ever so slightly.

Gently lifting the lid, he pulled a stack of golden waffles out of his coat pocket and placed them into the wooden box. Her favorite. They were nearly frozen, but he couldn't help that. *I sure hope the kid's the one who's eatin' these.*

An owl hooted in the distance.

Hopper sighed and looked around, checking to make sure there was no one around to unveil his secret. He retreated back to his truck and traveled down the gravel road.

To be continued...

Author's Note: Thank so much for reading! If you enjoyed this story, then i recommend checking out my Riverdale story. If you haven't watched Riverdale, you should! It's an amazing show. Anyway, i hope you return next week. Once again, thank you!

~Sofi

3. Chapter 3: New Friends, New Problems

Author's Note: I'm back and I'm late! I know! But, I was on vacation and I hadn't finished writing this chapter. I didn't want to just rush the end because I really want to put my heart, energy, and time into these stories. I know it's a stupid excuse, but I'm back and I will have the next chapter out Saturday! I also wanted to clear up that since this is my interpretation of season 2 with actual plot lines and characters from season 2, I will be using some scenes from the show. I do not take credit for writing those scenes! Anyway, thank you for listening to me babble but let's get to the story.

~Sofi

DISCLAIMER

I DO NOT OWN STRANGER THINGS I AM JUST BORROWING THE CHARACTERS AND SOME EVENTS

Chapter 3: New Friends, New Problems

"Video 7, Experiment Number 13," A voice rang over the intercom, but the young girl behind the glass couldn't hear a whisper. Her small frame sat upon a chilling metal chair as she looked on the wide table before her. A small tin soda can lie upon it, but she didn't know what it was. Wires wrapped her scalp, a barrier for her mind. Her full eyes, emerald-tinted orbs, stared longingly beyond the glass. Several men and a few women watched on the other side, clipboards ready in hand. A lengthy table sat just in front of the strangers who were gazing intently towards her.

Dr. Owens stepped towards the table where a mini black microphone sat, and spoke.

"Thirteen, can you hear me?" The miniscule girl gave a small and innocuous nod. "Good, good. Now, I need you to do something for me," He began, being as still and comforting as he could in a situation such as this one.

"Do you see the item on the table in front of you?" The young child repeated her actions. "I want you to crush it, with your mind." He made a gesture towards his head. "Try as hard as you can for me, alright?"

The girl sat up straight, inhaling a deep, low shaky breath. Her eyes, pinned against the aluminum can, squinted in compression. Her head began to shake as she focused deeply on the component before her.

"Concentrate, 13," Dr. Owens began, the newcomers vigorously scribbling on their clipboards.

Her head pounded with pain, praying for the sweet relief as soon as she ended the battle, but she kept focusing. Her vision blurred, but she kept going. Thirteen kept concentration until she couldn't feel any longer. She slumped back onto the hard alloy back of the chair. Her head rolled back, eyes mimicking the movement, feeling the alleviation of rest. A thin, crimson stream trickled from her left nostril as Dr. Owens sighed and picked up a phone from the desk. The tin can remained, unscathed.

"Doctor, the new experiment is showing signs of failure," He spoke, frustration lacing his voice.

The voice on the other side responded, "Well, we will just have to retrieve Eleven, Dr. Owens."

"Of course Dr. Brenner, she will not escape us again," With that, Dr. Owens hung up the phone, staring at the exhausted child behind the glass.

...

Will sighed. It was one of *those* days again, he was running late for school and he felt terrible. He shoved his school bag into the back of his locker and grabbed his science textbook. He had that sick, churning feeling in his stomach. *Probably all the pizza I ate at Mike's*, he told himself.

Will walked awkwardly down the hallway, palms growing ever more sweaty as he traveled further. It always felt like everyone was looking

at him, *watching* him. A drop of sweat dripped down the back of his neck. *Maybe it was just getting hotter?* Will quickly brushed it off, it was just himself being nervous, like he always was. He spotted Mr. Clarke's room and slightly picked up his pace, shoes squeaking loudly against the cream tiled floors of Hawkins Middle School. He entered the doorway of the classroom and, immediately, all his friends' heads turned in synchronization to greet him. Will smiled meekly; he hated being the center of attention.

"Hey man, why so late?" Dustin voiced, shoving multiple chips into his toothless mouth before hiding the bag away into the pocket of his usual hoodie.

"Oh, umm, just didn't feel too well, guess I had to much pizza last night," He said quietly, taking a seat behind Dustin.

Mike gently nudged him on the soldier, "Sorry man, I think we bought to much,"

"It's fine," Will replied as Mr. Clarke entered the classroom.

"Alright students," He started enthusiastically, "Before we began today, we should have a new student arriving soon,"

Almost as if on cue, the wooden door swung open and in stepped the new student. Her hair was bright red, and the wavy fiber draped loosely down just past her shoulders. She wore a ruby-red athletic jacket that scrunched the tiniest amount at her wrists. The zipper was down just about halfway to reveal a cream-colored top with numerous colored horizontal stripes. A plain pair of jeans clung to her legs as she held a school bag in one hand. She began to quickly race to her seat to avoid embarrassment, but Mr. Clarke stopped her.

"All right, hold up. You don't get away that easy," The teenage girl rolled her eyes and walked to the side of his desk. "Come on up, don't be shy." He made a nod towards Dustin.

"Dustin, drum roll," At that, Dustin closed his textbook and tapped his hands against the book.

Mr. Clarke began with suspense, "Class, please welcome, all the way

from sunny California, the latest passenger to join us on our curiosity voyage, Maxine!" He held a hand out to introduce her as he concluded his mini presentation.

"It's Max," she muttered, looking towards the floor while shaking her head slightly.

"Sorry?" Mr. Clarke asked, being caught off guard by her comment.

"Nobody calls me Maxine, it's Max." She repeated a little bit louder.

Mr. Clarke gave a meek smile, "Well, all aboard, Max."

Max brushed it off as she hurried to her seat at the back of the class. All the while, Dustin and Lucas watched her, clearly enticed by the foreigner. Mike watched the two companions, reading their expressions like books. Will sat quietly while looking down towards the floor as something bubbled in his gut.

Mr. Clarke began the class. "Now class today we-"

Will shot his hand up.

"Yes, Mr. Byers?" Mr. Clarke asked, the slightest bit annoyed.

"Umm," He stuttered, "C-can I go to the bathroom, please?" Will shifted uncomfortably in his seat.

"I guess so," Mr. Clarke gave him a small smile. Will returned one, but much more unsure and uneasy. He swiftly exited the classroom and raced down the hallway, frightful of what his stomach might push up. Will could feel the creature, the small slimy slug wriggle in his abdomen, longing for freedom.

While Dustin and Lucas 'swooned' (as Mike put it) over Max, Mike watched his shorter associate depart towards the restroom. He didn't look so well. Bad memories stirred awake within the young Wheeler boy, memories he wanted to keep asleep. Mike thought about it for a moment- his friend's demeanor, his appearance. It was all very strange, but Mike reminded himself that stranger things have happened. *It was just all the pizza he ate, right?*

. . .

"Hey, can you all go to the arcade later?"

"I'd have to check my stash but I'm pretty sure I can go."

"Yeah, I just gotta tell my mom."

"Cool, I'll call you on the Super-com later. How 'bout you Will?"

The bell had rung and the halls of Hawkins Middle were filled to the brim once again with the relieved and joyful spirits of the youth who attended there. Will's episode in the bathroom had subsided for the most part, but the jittery and tense feeling was still ever-so present in the bellows of his gut. Though his mind hung onto that fear, he let go of it for the most part.

"Will?" Lucas repeated, a worried expression working its way through his face.

"Oh, I just gotta tell my mom, too." He said, a little bit out of it.

Dustin tapped him on the shoulder, "You okay man?"

"Yeah, just a little nauseous I guess..." Mike did nothing but watch the conversation unfold.

Mike hopped up onto his bike after slipping his backpack over his shoulders, "Well I'll call you when I've told my mom. See ya!"

"See ya Mike!" Dustin called after him, while the rest perched upon their bicycles and rode off, heading towards their own personal destinations.

. . .

In the cold, bitter winter of Hawkins, Indiana, three teenage kids pulled up into the bright, neon-lit parking lot of 'The Palace Arcade.' Loose rocks were shot around beneath the rolling wheels of their bikes and left their marks in small patches of snow scattered about the pavement.

"So, why couldn't Will come tonight?" Lucas questioned while kicking up his bike stand.

Mike and Dustin repeated his actions. "Apparently he told his mom he hadn't been feeling his best and she *insisted* he stayed home." Dustin pulled a bag of chips from his pocket and began devouring them as if he hadn't eaten in days.

"Total bull," Lucas sighed.

The boys entered the bustling attraction and immediately headed over to Dragon's Lair so Dustin could win and get a higher score than Lucas. About an hour later, they decided to head over to Dustin's favorite, Dig Dug.

"No no no no no!" Dustin panicked as he looked upon the screen.

"Someone named 'Mad Max' got 751,300 points?" Lucas exasperated, very taken back by the new high score.

Mike looked on in disbelief, "That's impossible,"

"Mad Max... Mad Max!" Dustin chimed while looking towards the party members.

"Who's 'Mad Max?'" Mike asked, clearly puzzled. Lucas' face held the same contortion.

"Oh my god," Dustin muttered while shaking his head, "Are you both seriously this dense? Mad Max is Maxine, from school? The one who *literally* likes to be called Max?"

"We have *no proof* of that," Lucas sassed.

Dustin grew irritated quickly, "Oh my god Lucas! Use your common sense!"

"Girls don't play video games, though." Lucas countered, crossing his arms.

"Well, Lucas, last I checked girls don't really flip vans with their minds either!"

A silence fell over the three friends.

The tension was thick, way too thick. Dustin cleared his throat, "Umm, back to what I was talking about, do you think it's really a coincidence that *in the same day* a new student *named Max* comes to our school and someone with the *that name* beats my high score? I don't think so! Max is Mad Max!"

"Whatever, I mean she *does* ride a skateboard," Lucas added.

Mike stayed silent.

Lucas sighed, "Mike-"

"I-I just remembered, my mom wanted me home early, and it's already been an hour so, I gotta go," Mike uttered, looking towards his friend's almost forlorn faces. "I'll, uh, see ya later." He walked outside and hopped on his bike. He rode into the distance, knowing the only place that could give him comfort.

"Mike, wait!" Lucas called after him, "Great goin', idiot." Dustin scoffed and turned to go back inside.

Maybe I can try to talk to her again...maybe she'll listen, maybe she'll hear. He just wanted to sit in that *fort*. He wanted to sit in that *goddamn stupid blanket fort* until she comes back. He'd wait until time stopped. He'd wait until the world broke down and crumbled around him and there was nothing left. He'd wait forever. *She's not gone. She's still here.*

Mike barged open the basement door, pausing to look around. He stepped towards the fort, hesitating slightly as he took in the solemn sight. It was empty, incomplete.

~::~~

Mike handed her a sleeping bag to use for the night. He had quickly constructed a small but manageable blanket fort for her to stay in for the time being. "Hey, umm, I never asked your name,"

She turned towards him, eyes locked on her wrist. She pulled back her sleeve and revealed a tattoo depicting the number '011' just below her

palm.

"Is that real?" Mike went to touch the mark upon her wrist, but she flinched and quickly pulled her wrist away from his reach.

"Sorry I just...never seen a kid with a tattoo before," Mike apologized and smiled at her. "What's it mean? Eleven?"

She stared at him blankly, and then pointed towards herself, twice.

"That's your name?" Mike questioned, seemingly puzzled at the information. She nodded several times to signify that it was.

"Eleven...okay," Mike looked towards the floor, than had an idea, "Well, umm, my name's Mike, short for Michael. Maybe we can call you 'El', short for Eleven." She nodded, pleased with the idea.

"Umm, well, okay," Mike spoke again, a bit awkwardly, "Night El," Mike sat up and began to walk towards the stairs of the basement, but not before she replied.

She looked up at him, almost innocently, "Night Mike,"

Mike gave a small nod and lowered the sheet to cover the opening of the fort. He turned to walk up the stairs, and glanced back once more at the fort. His heart skipped a beat.

~::~~

Mike pulled back the sheet and peered inside.

At that moment, everything came crashing down. Every single emotion a human could feel lifted all its weight onto one, scrawny teenage boy. Mike fell onto his knees before the blanket construction. Shaky, heartbreaking sobs escaped his lips as hot tears flowed from his eyes. Trembling, he rested on the floor of the fort, reaching out for someone who couldn't reach back. It was much too much, it was too hard to wait for something that might never even happen, but it was so much harder to give up on it. He'd do it for her. He felt it, he felt her presence. Maybe it was wishful thinking? No. It was almost like a piece of her stayed there, waiting for her to return. A piece of her that would've died out with the rest of her but didn't. That was all

the hope that Mike needed. He hadn't known how much time had passed, but Mike continued to sob with himself, out of somber, out of hope, out of acceptance.

"Mike?"

A small voice came from the staircase.

Nancy stepped onto the concrete floor of the lowest level and walked towards the fort. She knelt down to observe her brother, her heart crumbling at the sight. She could see the tear streaks, and they left his eyes red and puffy with emotion.

Mike croaked, "N-Nancy?" He looked up at her and her heart broke clear down the middle.

Nancy reached a hand out and pulled her younger brother into a tight embrace, and just sat there. Neither cared how long, they just sat there and hugged for as long as they needed. "It's okay, Mike, I'm here," Nancy mumbled, over and over again.

After some time, Nancy broke the embrace and looked her brother right in the eyes. She knew all too well what was going on. "Mike-

"I know what you're gonna say!" Mike snapped, "E-El's gone and I should get over it! But you don't understand, I know she's alive! S-she, she-

"*Mike!*" Nancy said again, "I believe you,"

Mike became confused, "Y-you do?"

"Of course," she gave him a small smile, "Look, I don't *really* know El, but I know one thing, and that's that she is strong. Besides, no one *saw* her die, she just disappeared, right?" Mike nodded, interested in what she was saying.

"I'm not just saying this to make you feel better, I just think she's lost. But, she *will* find her way home. She really likes you, she wouldn't leave you behind just to make you feel bad." She comforted, giving Mike one more hug.

"I wish Lucas would believe that, he never really liked her but I thought he changed." Mike expressed, wiping stray tears from the brims of his eyes.

"Well screw Lucas! He doesn't deserve to be friends with her, then." She threw her hands up in the air in exasperation.

"Thanks," Mike replied, nudging Nancy on the shoulder as they both chuckled.

"Now come on, let's get to bed." The siblings, now closer than they ever were before, walked up to their bedrooms to escape their harsh reality. Unbeknownst to them, a muted static crackle escaped the Super-com nestled in the pillows of the blanket fort.

"."

To be continued...

Author's Note: Thank you so much for reading and I hope you enjoyed! (So sorry Mike you'll meet her again someday T-T) Anyway, leave a review! I hope you come back Friday! Thank you!

~Sofi

4. Chapter 4: Not As He Seems

Author's Note: Hey, thanks for coming back! So, I've been taking some time to write multiple chapters, and, for the next 3 days, I will be uploading a chapter each day. I hope you like the idea! I'm just so busy because of summer plans, but I know that's just an excuse. I hope you enjoy!

~Sofi

DISCLAIMER

I DO NOT OWN STRANGER THINGS I AM JUST BORROWING THE CHARACTERS AND SOME EVENTS

Chapter 4: Not as He Seems

The chill, it was terrifying. He knew where he was, but not the place. The specific *place* mirrored in the Upside Down was unfamiliar. Fear spread throughout Will's mind, seeping into every single nook and cranny. He was so scared, more scared than he had felt in a long time. Almost as if it was the first time he had been there. It was last year all over again. The glowing white particles swirled around his figure, landing below him onto the dirty, slimy earth. A slight breeze, seemingly from nowhere, tussled Will's hair. *How long had he been standing there?*

The smell, it was horrendous. She knew where she was, but not the place. The specific *place* mirrored in the Upside Down was unfamiliar. An unsettling feeling gurgled in the bellows of Eleven's gut, churning and twisting in an uneasy way. Her heart raced, more than it had ever raced in a long time. Almost as if she was in the lab. It was the last 11 years all over again. The luminous flakes gliding through the air moved circled her, resting at her feet below. A gust of wind, seemingly from nowhere, shifted Eleven's dress. *How long had she been sitting there?*

Will observed his surroundings, trying to make sense of where he was. Although the foreign land was eroded and worn, his location was still unrecognizable. He seemed to be standing at the edge of a

forest, far off from any civilization. The grass below his feet was dead, damp with an obscure slime that appeared to coat everything in the alternate dimension. Vines winded around and up the trees, a rough texture covering them. Thunder crackled and Will towards the distance at the swelling storm. The clouds were ominous, a deep red hue staining the haze. *Why hadn't he returned home yet?*

Eleven stood up, observing her surroundings as well. She eyed the storm too, the unsettling feeling creeping into the back of her mind. The thick, gooey sludge clung to her knees and shins, as well as her hands. Deep blue, almost black, vines lay on the floor, surrounded by debris and chunks of god-knows-what. She swore she saw one move. Eleven flinched at the thunder; it's bottomless sound ringing in her ears, over and over. She was also at the edge of the forest, Will only a few feet away, but they couldn't see each other. They were much to focused on the ruby glow in the sky.

They continued to peer into horizon. Eleven squinted her eyes and turned her gaze below the storm, Hawkins lying beneath. Her breathing got a bit quicker. Will could only keep his eyes on what was emerging from the sinister clouds.

An enormous silhouette materialized before them, looming above every single thing that stood. It's head came to a point and it's slender body faded into the clouds, almost as if it were a shadow itself. Long, tentacle-like arms expanded over the disturbed town. *It was planning something.*

Will stepped forward, snapping a stiff twig beneath his sneaker. Eleven's head shot in his direction. Her face contorted into a fearful expression. "Will?"

His face turned towards the voice. He recognized her. Before he could say anything, an anomalous sound echoed through the air and the children were zapped back into reality.

. . .

"Look, Marissa, can I just see these articles?" Hopper gestured his hand in annoyance. He did talk with his hands a lot.

"Why do you need them, Jim? No one's missing last I heard," She shifted from one heel to another behind the welcoming desk of the library.

"Classified," He countered, straightening his face. "Just let me see 'em,"

"Fine," The librarian stepped out from behind the desk and lead Hopper over to the side. "What will it be this time?"

"The same, any you can find on Hawkins Lab," Hopper transferred his hat between hands, a little embarrassed by the repetition of the previous year.

"You sure are obsessed with that place," Marissa opened a few miniscule draws to reveal the contents inside.

"Well, we'll do it like last time, you check "Times" and I'll check "The Post,""

"Okay," She snorted as if she had been offended and walked away. Hopper let out a quick sigh and began to search.

In the monitor, beyond the rounded glass, he tediously read through each news article and headline. One read: "Rumors have been escalating surrounding human mind control experiments. In this small town, unnerving reports have begun to come up of children physical and mental testing in hopes to 'expand the boundaries of the human mind,'" Another headline read: "CHILDREN ALLEGEDLY ABDUCTED FOR EXPERIMENTAL TESTING," Hopper's mind swirled back to Terry. Those people ruined her life, all for this little girl. He wondered, he had to know what happened to her. Hopper sighed. *This wasn't enough information.*

"Thank you again Marissa," He uttered as he exited the building.

"No problem," She replied sarcastically. "And if you ever need those news articles again, just leave me a note and get to it,"

He gave a small nod and left through the grand double doors of the Hawkins Library. As he exited, Hopper pulled out a pack of Camels from his back pocket. He pressed one in his mouth, watching the

smoky wisps leave his lips and disappear into the atmosphere as he exhaled. *What am I gonna do?* He shifted into the front seat of his truck, placing his hat onto the dashboard in front of him. He thought for a moment, a good long minute. "Screw it,"

Hopper withdrew from the front seat and checked the back of the car. The wire cutters were still there. He chuckled to himself and glanced down towards the watch tightly wound about his wrist. 5:15. He still had a few more hours, but he could prepare during that time. Hopper threw the cigarette to the pavement and stomped down on it, extinguishing the spark. He swiftly returned to his seat and started the engine, shaking the car as grey smoke exited through the exhaust. He pulled his car from the parking lot and traveled down the road. He had a plan, and he was set on it.

...

"Will?" Joyce's voice rang through the house. She marched her way to Will's bedroom and opened the worn wooden door. "Will time to-" The room was empty. "Will?"

"Mom! I'm in the bathroom! I'll be out in a second," Will's muffled voice escaped from beneath the door. Joyce let out a good, long sigh of relief before retreating to the kitchen. Jonathan resided by the stove, cooking something that smelled exquisite. He flipped a piece of bacon in a skillet, sizzling as it fell against the heated iron. The heat filled the room, but the scent made up for it.

"Jonathan, have you seen my keys?" Joyce rummaged through her purse, checking the table and counters briefly. "I swear I had them in my bag,"

"Did you check the couch?" He exclaimed over his shoulder, chuckling internally at the repetition. "I thought I saw 'em there before I started dinner,"

"I'll check but- oh, got 'em," Her face slightly shifted to red in embarrassment, but Joyce quickly shook it off. "Will? You're going to be late if we don't hurry up!"

"I'm coming!" He responded, washing his hands quickly. He turned

the faucet and looked into the mirror cabinet hung above the sink. *Oh no.*

Water fell slowly from the end of the faucet. *Drip.* A familiar sting crept up the back of Will's throat. *Drip, drip.* Will coughed. *Drip, drip, drip.* He coughed a second time. Then, the feeling was gone. Will sighed, not noticing the small grin flash across his face for a brief moment. He hurried from the bathroom, grabbing his bag from his room on the way out.

"Ready," Will uttered, entering the kitchen. He pulled the bag onto his back as he headed towards the door.

"Alright," Joyce pulled her own bag onto her shoulder and mimicked her son's actions. "I'll just be a few minutes, I'm dropping Will off at the Wheeler's for a sleepover,"

"I'll have dinner ready by then," Jonathan replied, his eyes never leaving the pan before him.

"Perfect," Joyce said back while granting him a small grin. "Come on," She ushered Will out the door and followed him. The brittle wind greeted the mother and son unpleasantly as they made their way to Joyce's car.

Joyce pulled into the Wheeler residents as Will quickly unbuckled his seat belt. He rushed to get out of the car and into the house, but his mother quickly stopped him.

"Now, please stay inside tonight, okay?" Joyce said, going over every rule they had made in her mind. She *did not* want a repeat of last November. "And remember, if anything bad happens, and I mean anything, I want you to call me straight away,"

"Mom, okay, okay, I know," Will turned to go inside.

"Wil!"

"Yes?" Will asked, a bit irritated, but nonetheless giggling.

"I love you," Joyce reminded him, though there wasn't really any need to. He already knew.

"Love you too, bye!" Will waved towards the vehicle pulling out of the driveway, his mother waving back. He wasted no time rushing to the door. Ever since the episode in the bathroom just before he had left, Will felt happier, more hopeful. He was genuinely excited to do something with his friends again. *Maybe it's finally going to stop*, Will told himself.

Mrs. Wheeler opened the door and greeted Will. She let him inside and he quickly through his shoes off onto the mat beside the door. She told him the rest of the boys were downstairs and ushered him to the entrance of the basement.

"Byers!" Dustin shouted as he spotted his friend bound down the staircase towards them. Will noticed the usual D&D table had moved to the side as to make room for a boxy television. He dropped his backpack onto the couch and joined his friends on the floor, multiple movie cases and VHS tapes surrounding them.

"You'll never guess what movie i got to watch tonight!" Mike exasperated, clearly very happy to share the information with them.

"We've been waiting for Mike to tell us, but he *insisted* we all be here," Lucas complained while moving aside to make room for Will.

Mike smiled to himself and slowly pulled the movie from behind his back. On the cover lay a green, oozing egg of some sort and underneath the text: "In space no one can hear you scream." In bold, white letters across the top read: "Alien."

"No way, Mike," Dustin shook his head. "If your mom finds out we're watching that, she'll beat your ass,"

"She won't find out! Besides, weren't you the one who wanted to watch "A Nightmare On Elm Street?" That would for sure put us all on house arrest!" Mike countered, removing the VHS from inside the casing.

"Fine," Dustin muttered, defeated. As Mike started the movie, the party members took their place in preparation to watch the horror film. Will sat upon the couch, saving the spot beside him for Mike, while Dustin and Lucas laid out their sleeping bags in front of the

sofa. "Oh man," Dustin chimed, "I'm so nervous!"

"Just shut up already," Lucas whispered, whacking his friend on the arm.

"Hey, before we start, what time is it?" Will uttered, turning towards Mike.

"I'm not sure, let me go get my watch," Mike quickly got up from the couch, hurrying over to the other end of the room. He looked down at the watch resting on the table, almost too long.

~::~~

"Boys! Time for school!" Mrs. Wheeler shouted from the top of the stairs.

Dustin and Lucas quickly grabbed their bags and jackets and headed up the stairs, determined not to make Mrs. Wheeler angry. Mike knelt down next to her, who was lying on the sofa in his basement. "Just stay down here. Don't make any noise, and don't leave," Mike uttered, soft but yet firm, so she would understand. "If you get hungry, eat Dustin's snacks, okay?"

Mrs. Wheeler yelled once more, annoyance lining her voice. "Michael!"

"COMING!" Mike hollered back, a little too aggressive. "You know those power lines?"

"Power lines?" The girl repeated, with confusion.

"Yeah," Mike replied, "The ones behind my house?"

She nodded in understanding, "Yes,"

Mike quickened the speed of his talking, "Meet us there, after school,"

"After school?" She questioned the confusion contorting her face once more.

"Yeah, 3:15," Mike clarified, his eyes never leaving hers. She still remained in her confused state. "Ah," Mike muttered, reaching for his wrist. He unraveled his watch, placing it around her own wrist. "When the

numbers read 3 1 5, meet us there."

She looked towards him, "3, 1, 5,"

"3 1 5," Mike defined for her, and she gave him a soft, kind of awkward smile. With that, he turned and grasped his backpack, loudly racing up the staircase. He barely noticed his face growing redder by the second.

~::~~

The rest of the night went pretty smoothly, the boys finished watching "Alien," leaving Will a bit paranoid. They began to watch the "Star Wars" trilogy, but slowly transitioning to board games and comic books after the second movie. Dustin had brought his "X-Men" comic #134, which Will had tried to sneak into his own bag multiple times, but to no avail. Finally, as 8:00 turned to 12:00, the boys began to unravel their sleeping bags and lay down. Mike slept atop the couch, while the other three slept on the floor. Lucas laid closest to the couch, then Dustin beside him to his left, and then Will. Will had placed his sleeping bag closest to the bathroom, just in case.

Within the early, early hours of morning, around 3:00 or 4:00, Will awoke in a cold sweat. His stomach made a low, familiar gurgle, and he rushed towards the bathroom. He slammed the door, a big mistake a wished he hadn't made. Instantly, the rest of the party members shot up from their resting positions and looked towards the bathroom.

"Will? Are you in there?" Mike asked, rubbing his eyes in exhaustion.

"Y-yeah," Will stammered, heaving over the sink.

"You okay?" Lucas sat up taller, concern making its way into his face.

"I'm, I'm fi-" Will started to cough, hard. He realized the plug in the drain of the sink, but he had no time to remove it. Will could feel the slimy creature work its way up his throat, getting closer and closer to the exit with each hem and hack. The gooey critter slid from his tongue and plopped into the sink, sending spots of slime in multiple directions.

"Will!" Mike repeated. This time, his voice was right behind the door.

Will glanced into the porcelain sink. He would transport into the Upside Down any second now. *That's it. I've gotta tell them.*

Will gently opened the door to be greeted by his 3 friends who had all worn matching, befuddled expressions. "I've gotta tell you guys something, It's really important, I-" Without warning, in the middle of Will's sentence, he had vanished. Gone.

The boys began to panic.

"Will?" Mike said alarmed, eyes filling with terror and bewilderment.

"Shit! Where'd he go?" Lucas half-whispered, looking on to the other party members.

"Oh my god, oh my god. Shit guys, this is bad! Really, really bad!" Dustin chimed while pacing back and forth, hands thrown up in exasperation.

Lucas smacked him on the arm, "Don't you think we know that already? Pacing isn't going to do us any good!"

"Guys! Get over here, right now!" Mike yelled from the bathroom. He was stood in front of the sink peering inside. Mike had a bad feeling, a really bad feeling.

"What is i- Holy shit!" Dustin hollered, Lucas cupping his hand over Dustin's mouth as to not make too much noise.

Lucas released his hand from Dustin's mouth looked into the sink with his two companions. "D-did Will cough that thing up?" His mouth twitched in disgust.

"I think so," Mike muttered, eyeing the miniscule slug a bit closer.

Suddenly, a gasp from outside the bathroom startled the 3 boys. They rushed to see Will, sitting crisscross applesauce on the blankets in Mik- Eleven's, blanket fort. He had his hand up, as if he were analyzing an object in his hand that wasn't there. He looked up towards his friends, a lump growing in the back of his esophagus. "Look-"

"Where the hell did you go?"

"Yeah, and what's that *thing* in the sink?"

"How long has this been going on?"

Will read each of their expressions as their eyes burned holes into his head. "I... I went to the Upside Down."

"*What?*" Lucas expressed, clearly angry and confused, "Since when? How long, Will?"

"Since, uh... since last Christmas,"

"*Last Christmas?!*" Dustin repeated, voice growing. "Why haven't you told anybody? This is serious!"

Will grew smaller beneath them, "I know, I know. I just, thought it would go away, you know? I didn't want to worry anybody!"

"You didn't want anyone to *worry*? Will, come on! We're your friends, that's our *job*! What if something happened? What if you didn't come back?"

"I know!" Will snapped, causing them all to flinch, "I'm sorry, okay? I just wanted everything to go back to normal!" Will's head fell, and a silence fell upon the group. Then, Will remembered something. "Hey, umm... I think I saw something, in the Upside Down, in the blanket fort,"

Mike's head turned. Everybody knew why. "What? What'd you see?"

"You said that girl, Eleven, likes Eggo's, right?" Each party member, especially Mike, nodded and leaned closer to Will. "Well, in the fort, I saw a waffle. I know it's not much, but there was a pretty small bite in it."

"Are you serious?" Mike raised his voice, causing Lucas to shush him.

"Hold on, hold on..." Lucas began, a bit obnoxious, "How old was this waffle?"

"Really?" Dustin replied while his eyebrows rose, heading towards the bathroom once more.

"I'm just asking! This could be like a year old," Lucas countered.

"No, no... It looked pretty recent, maybe a month? 3 weeks? I'm not totally sure, but definitely not a year,"

Mike looked on into Will's eyes. The flame, the flame that was dwindling on nothing but a spark, grew bright, bolder. Mike's hope began to return. *She's out there. I knew it, all along.*

"Get your asses here now, all of you!" Dustin stood at the entrance to the bathroom, the panic lacing his crackly voice. Each of the boys hurried to the door, to which Dustin ushered them to look into the sink.

"Oh shit," Lucas whispered.

Mike's breathing picked up, "Where the hell did it go?"

To be continued...

Author's Note: Thank you so much for reading, leave a review, I'd very much appreciate it! I'll be uploading a chapter every other day for the next 5 chapters starting Friday, including my other story, which will begin tomorrow! Thank you for following this story, I hope you return Friday!

~Sofi

5. Chapter 5: Strange Occurings

Author's Note: I know, I KNOW, I've been gone forever. School and extracurriculars have taken up SO much time, and, on top of that, I still need time to be a normal teenager and enjoy my youth. Enough with the excuses! Let's get to the long awaited chapter!

~Sofi

DISCLAIMER

I DO NOT OWN STRANGER THINGS I AM JUST BORROWING THE CHARACTERS AND SOME EVENTS

Chapter 5: Strange Occurings

The fine, gray dust kicked up beneath the car tires of Hopper's car. He had switched his usual police vehicle for a more discreet or casual one. After all, if he really was going to do this, he was not going to make a mistake like the last time, and he definitely was not dragging the Joyce or the rest of her family down with him again. Yes, they escaped and saved Will, but that was extremely lucky. And not to mention, with the help of a psychic, telekinetic teenage experiment.

Hopper had the wheel in one hand and a cigarette in the other as his car slowly rolled closer and closer to the entrance. The wire fence taunted him as he drove past, and what's worse is it actually kind of got to him. It reminded him of her. More specifically, it reminded him of what he did to her. Sure, it was an extremely difficult and critical decision for anyone to make, but anyway you look at it, it was betrayal. Straight up betrayal. The cop glared at the fence almost as if it were a person, but he quickly shot down the feeling and slowly rolled to a stop at the tall wire gate of the sinister laboratory.

"Shit," He muttered as he looked through the panel of crisscrossed metal. *They must have increased security. Damn that Owens.* Hopper ultimately decided not to go. It wasn't worth getting shot if he didn't have concrete evidence that she wasn't in that lab. Sure, there definitely was a high chance animals were eating those waffles, but

there was still the tiniest sliver of hope that she was the one doing it. That was all he needed. The tiniest sliver.

Hopper's car looked gray and fuzzy within the eye of the security cam. A constant grain glazed the screen as well as various white streaks of static. The young man operating the monitors turned around in his swivel chair. "Do you know who that is, Doc?"

Doctor Owens surveyed the car as it slowly rolled off screen and beyond the lens of the camera. "Now I'm not totally sure," he began, locking eyes with the man, "But I have a strong inkling as to who it is... "

. . .

7 hours before Will's episode at Mike's: 8:30 p.m.

A knock startled Jonathan from the stove. *Shit! I totally forgot*, he thought. He hadn't realized how long it had been since Joyce had gotten back from taking Will over to Mike's. Jonathan quickly set the table before swiftly rushing to the door.

"Hey," Nancy greeted. She looked up at him and gave him a soft smile.

"H-hey," He responded, a bit winded from the hustle. "Sorry, I had to set the table really quick, uh, come inside," He moved aside and held the door open so Nancy could enter. "Mom! Nancy's here and dinner is ready!"

Within the next few moments, Joyce came down the hall. "Hey Nancy! How've you been?"

"Pretty good Mrs. Byers, you?" Nancy responded as Joyce greeted her with a warm embrace.

"Oh, you now, always hectic with two boys but we manage." She smiled at Jonathan while, unbeknownst to them, they both subconsciously thought of Will.

They gathered at the table. All three chatted for a while, enjoying the absolutely delectable, (as Joyce put it) American-style hamburgers

Jonathan cooked up. They continued their banter a good half an hour after finishing the meal. Most of it was the usual, "How are you siblings?" "Your parents?" "How's school?" Once in a while though, they'd give little hints toward certain past events. Sometimes they'd, "Things have changed, but..." or "He's holding up, though." All in all, Joyce was just relieved Jonathan had finally found someone. Someone who understood him; someone who he could talk to when he wouldn't talk to her. Especially, she thought, especially after Will...

After the delightful reunion, Joyce separated from the pair to leave them alone. Jonathan had invited Nancy to a Guns N' Roses concert that was that night. She had mentioned them to him before as one of the only rock bands that she thought was kind of cool. He had remembered that and got tickets early, and she was more than grateful.

"You ready?" Nancy grabbed her bag and turned toward Jonathan.

Jonathan seemed to be looking around for something. "Yeah, just tryna' find my jacket. You know, I think Will took I'll check his room really quick."

"Okay, but hurry! We don't want to be late!" Nancy replied, taking a seat at the table for the time being.

Jonathan entered Will's room, which was littered with clothes. He began throwing clothes around, messing up the bed, and looking under everything. "Come on Will, where'd you put it?"

Crackle.

A loud buzz sounded from the dark corner of the room. Jonathan jumped up, nearly tripping on the clothes sprawled out beneath him. He looked toward the noise and paused. The corner was cast in a shadow via Will's door, allowing the unknown sound to remain hidden.

Crackle.

". . . H e . . . l p . . . "

The sound went in and out continuously. Jonathan's heart raced as he tried desperately to decipher what his ears were hearing. It sounded familiar but he couldn't place it. He walked toward the light switched, keeping his eyes square on the corner, and flicked on the lights. He walked toward the sound as it continued to sound. Eerie and unknown.

His heart stilled as he picked up the device emanating the mysterious noise. Now, Jonathan had a Super-com when he was Will's age, but he could hardly remember what the knobs and buttons do. Eventually, Jonathan turned the right knob and turned up the volume.

"Jonathan? You read- what is that noise?" Nancy walked toward Jonathan and surveyed the object in his hand.

"I-I don't know, it just started making these noises,"

"You think it's Mike or something?"

"I don't see why it would be, since Will and the others are over there and there'd be no reason for their walkie talkies to be on,"

". . . G r r . . ."

"Jonathan, I don't like this," Nancy whispered, holding onto Jonathan's back.

". . . W i l l i n . . r o u . . . l e . ."

Jonathan and Nancy stared on. A feeling stirred in their guts that they just couldn't place. It wasn't a voice they recognized...Or was it? Who was on the other side?

. . .

Present time: Wheeler's Household

"Oh my god, oh my god, oh my god..."

"Check under the sink!"

"Maybe it moved into one of the sleeping bags?"

"Dustin! Cut it out!"

Lucas smacked Dustin on the back of the head. "Dude, what the hell was that for?!"

"Shhh!" Lucas reminded. "Pacing around and panicking won't help! We need to find this thing, and fast at that!"

"We don't even know *what* this thing is!" Dustin countered. They looked at each other with fire in their eyes, ready to brawl, but this wasn't the time.

Will walked in between them. "Both of you cut it out!" All three of the boys, including Mike who had been searching the bathroom, looked toward Will. "Fighting won't help either! We all have to focus. Mike, continue searching the bathroom. I'll check the sleeping bags while you two search the couch and floor."

Each party member got straight to work. It was weird, though. They usually thought of Will as a shy, push-over type kid, but seeing him like this startled the boys. They've never seen him like this.

Maybe it was under the sofa? No. In the garbage can? Nope. The shower? Not there either. Slowly and slowly, despite Lucas and Will's words, they all began to panic. Mike looked over to Will rummaging through the sleeping bags. Mike took a particular notice to his face. The young wise wizard looked determined. His heart was set on finding this thing, but he also seemed worried. Well, Mike thought that wasn't quite the word for it. Somewhere between worried, and *terrified*. Paranoid might have been the word, but it still wasn't completely satisfactory. Mike, or the other two boys for that matter, was clueless as to any idea of what this grotesque creature was. If Will was like this trying to find it, then there's no limit to what evil-doing that tiny life form could commit.

Suddenly, a shout came from the corner just to the right of the bathroom. "I got it! I found it!" Dustin exclaimed, a hint of pride engraved in his voice.

"SHHHH!" They boys chimed in unison, causing Dustin to roll his eyes as they gathered around him.

After surveying the creature a bit, the boys placed the slimy entity onto the table and put a clear plastic bin square on top of it. They gathered a few heavy toys and books to set atop the box as well. You know, just in case.

They sat Will down on the couch and stood in front of him. From Will's perspective, Lucas was on the left, Mike center, and Dustin to the right. Mike took particular notice to Will's quite heavy breathing. Why did he notice this?

~::~~

A crack of thunder sounded outside the walls.

The girl looked down, breathing heavily. She was drenched, and, even though Mike's coat was draped around her, a chill still ran up her spine. She was seated on a couch, though she didn't know what that was. Three boys, the ones who found her running in the woods, stood before her.

"Is there a number we can call, for your parents?"

"Where's your hair? Do you have cancer?"

"Did you run away?"

"Are you in some kind of trouble?"

Her eyes darted to each boy as they spoke, but the questions were moving way too fast. They were moving too fast to comprehend.

"Is that blood?" The boy to the farthest left reached out to confirm his suspicion, but his hand was quickly swatted away by the dark haired boy standing next to him.

"Stop it! You're freaking her out!" The boy said, scolding the one who had tried to touch the blood stained onto her shirt.

"She's freaking me out!" The boy countered, but the center boy just ignored it.

The boy to the far right joined the conversation. "I bet she's deaf." Suddenly, and without warning, he made a loud 'clap' with his hands in front of the girl, who flinched. "She's not deaf," he shrugged.

"Alright, that's enough, alright?" The dark haired boy once again silenced his other friend. "She's just scared, and cold." She looked amongst the boys, still fairly confused.

An idea popped into the dark haired boy's head. He swiftly turned around and retrieved a pair of pants and a sweatshirt from a basket of clean clothes not too far away. The other two boys continued to look at her as the thunder boomed louder. She squeezed her eyes shut. The boy was right for something. She was most definitely scared.

The dark haired boy returned from the basket and handed her the clothes. "Here, these are clean, okay?" The girl looked puzzlingly at the clothes, but, hesitantly, she took them. She very softly smelled them, and they smelled absolutely wonderful. Definitely better than anything in that place.

She carefully got up, and began to lift her shirt.

"No no no!"

"Oh my god, oh my god, oh my god!"

The two boys to the right and left quickly turned around, shielding their eyes from what the girl was about to do. The dark haired boy was swift to stop her from stripping in front of them. She still seemed puzzled, though. She was only changing. This is how she did it everyday.

"Over there," the dark haired boy informed her as he pointed to a door at the back of the room, "That's the bathroom. Privacy, get it?" She looked at him, feeling bad for what she did. She didn't think she was doing anything wrong, but by their reaction, she obviously was.

The dark haired boy led her over to the bathroom where she could change. She walked in, surveying the room as the dark haired boy closed the door. She panicked and stopped him. No way she was letting that happen.

The boy seemed startled. "You don't want it closed?" He asked, trying to

figure out why she didn't.

The girl hesitated, but finally spoke up. "No."

The boy seemed a bit pleased by her voice. "Oh, so you can speak." He began to think of a solution. In no way was she changing with the door wide open, but she obviously had a problem with closed in spaces, or at least closed doors. "Okay, well, um, why don't we just keep the door, just like this? Is that better?" He finished, having closed the door with nothing but a sliver that he could see her through.

"Yes," she responded. He nodded for assurance and left to give her that needed privacy. What was with this girl?

~::~~

"Alright Will, talk."

Will shifted. He didn't think his friends were going to find out this way. "The truth is, I don't really know what they are..."

"You've got to be kidding me!" Dustin threw his hands up in frustration. The other two looked toward him somewhat sympathetically. Will's brows knitted themselves into a sorrowful expression, and he couldn't help but feel terrible for this. Useless. Of course he didn't have the answers. Of course he didn't.

Even though this was true, he tried to defend himself. "I-I'm scared, okay?! I don't know what's happening to me, I don't know what those things are! I'm sorry I don't know how to fix this!" Will buried his face into his hands, weary of the eyes on him. Mike joined him on the couch.

"Will, it's ok, I think we're all just a little shaken because of this." Will looked up toward Mike as he spoke, remnants of a few loose tears near the brims of his eyes.

"Yeah, but Will, you gotta understand." Lucas sat on the other side of Will. "If you don't let us know these things, they're not gonna get fixed, okay? I know you don't want us to worry, but we're okay with it. I mean, look at what we've been through!"

Will nodded, giving Lucas and Mike a genuine smile. Dustin calmly placed a hand on Will's shoulder, a metaphor for forgiveness, perhaps. It was nice, Will thought. Just to be there. In the 'now', as people called it. To be forgiven. To have *friends* who *understood* him. For once in a very long while, he seemed genuinely, completely happy. Dustin's expression quickly turned to that of concern, though.

"Are we gonna tell anyone?" Dustin questioned. They were all silent. If they told anyone, it would eventually get to Hopper and they would *all* get their asses whooped. Mike shuttered at the very thought of it.

"I-I think I'll tell my mom tomorrow," Will spoke, trying desperately to pull any kind of confidence to his voice. "I've kept it a secret long enough, and I don't want to carry this worry around with me any longer."

They all smiled, happy that Will chose this decision. It was rare that this happened, even for close friends. To be completely in sync with each other. They might have not known exactly what was happening to Will, or what was going to happen, but they understood each other. And yes, it sounds cheesy, but it's true. When you are truly close with others, this 'cheesiness' becomes a sort of second nature.

"Well, not to ruin the mood, but..." Mike began, glancing at the table in the back of the basement.

"Yeah?" Will question, following his eyes.

"What are we gonna do with that thing?"

To be continued...

Author's Note: Thank you for reading! Now that Will's secret is out, the real action will start soon... Excited? I hope you are! Until next time,

~Sofi